

Youth Interfaith Assemblages as Alternative Communities in Post-Coup Myanmar

Wuttyee

Abstract

This study examines how youth in post-coup Myanmar navigate religious uncertainty, social fragmentation, and political crisis through participation in interfaith communities. While existing studies often understand interfaith initiatives through the framework of peacebuilding, social cohesion, or religious harmony, this paper argues that these approaches are insufficient for explaining why youth continue to engage in such spaces amid growing disillusionment with established religious and social institutions following the 2021 coup. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with young people involved in a youth-led interfaith community in Hpa-An, Karen State, this study conceptualizes these formations as social assemblages that function as alternative communities amid political instabilities. While participants engage collectively in dialogue, shared practices and everyday interaction, the findings suggest that these assemblages are sustained not through shared identity or ideological consensus, but through ongoing encounters across difference. This supplements Tanabe's concepts of *Communitas* and *Reflexivity*, elucidating that youth interfaith assemblages in post-coup Myanmar cultivate solidarity without homogeneity. By foregrounding youth as important catalyst in reimagining belonging and collective life in contemporary Myanmar, this paper ultimately reveals that religion, far from being confined to institutions or extremist movements, becomes a site of reflexive practices, ethical negotiation and transformative agency.